

RAIDER 6 FRG UPDATE

30 JUL 06

Raider Brigade Family and Friends: time for an update. It's the end of July – it is about 108 degrees today – which is as cool as it's been in about a month. The Soldiers are dealing with the heat as well as can be expected. Wearing the body armor and associated gear makes things a little challenging, but we drink plenty of water and watch each other closely. We've had remarkably few problems with heat injuries so far thanks to the non-commissioned officers enforcing standards.

It's been another busy and crazy month since my last update. The Regulars of 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry rejoined the Raider Brigade team at the end of June and have been doing fantastically well in their new area of responsibility. I'm very proud of how they made the difficult transition into a new area of operation and the move into a new Forward Operating Base. LTC Osborne, CSM Beal and the Regulars continue to live by their motto, "Deeds, Not Words."

The pace here continues to somehow get busier by the week. Getting the sectarian violence under control has become our focus – and it's not an easy task. The average Iraqi citizen I talk to on patrol in the various communities across the Raider Brigade area of operation are intensely worried about the rising violence – and hopes their government will act to get it under control. Regardless of which side of the argument I listen to (the Sunni or Shi'a side), both condemn those that are supporting the violence. I can't discuss details of what we are doing or going to do for operational security reasons – but I can say that we'll be very busy. We'll be working closely with our Iraqi brothers – the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi Police. This continues to be a main task – getting the Iraqi Security Forces out in front and into the lead.

We are almost complete with the summer transition within the Raider Brigade. By 1 August we will have completed 17 company level changes of command within the Raider Brigade – and will change out one more unit in mid August. I'm very proud of the captains that have come out of command. They trained their unit, deployed them into combat, and led them in combat superbly. Some are staying on the team here in 1st Brigade while others are moving to the 4th Infantry Division staff. The new commanders are already making a difference in their companies. The Soldiers have made the transition very smooth for their new commanders – we have not missed a beat.

I continue to be impressed each day by the Soldiers in the brigade. I've made an effort this month to go see Soldiers in the tougher places they are operating to gauge their outlook and moral. In general, the Soldiers are doing incredibly well. We are understandably a little tired. The pace and length of stay so far makes this natural. Moral continues to be good, though. Most questions at this point are about the future – what is going to happen once we get home. I'm working this closely with MG Thurman and plan on briefing the chain of command in early

August. I plan also to conduct a briefing to the families back at Fort Hood on several things: what we're doing here; when we're coming home; what the plan is once we get home; and what is in the future for the brigade and your Soldier. I'm not sure when my leave is going to be yet – but I promise to get the word out through my Rear Detachment Commander (Major Rick Caya) and the Family Readiness Group chain of concern of where and when the briefing will be. Stay tuned – and bring all your questions to that briefing. I'll stay all night if required to take your questions. I may not have all the answers, but I'll track them down for you.

OK – sorry this is a little short this time. I'll do better next time. I will tell you that your Soldier over here in Iraq is doing fantastically well. He or she is proud of what they are doing – whether that is out on patrol, in a combat outpost, in a guard tower on Taji, or the countless other difficult but necessary missions here. I could not be more proud of what they are doing. I know you are proud of them also. We appreciate your continued support – it makes a real difference on this end.

Colonel Jim Pasquarette
Raider 6